

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 125 729

JC 760 406

AUTHOR Frank, Ruth E.
 TITLE The Utilization of Lay Advisory Committees in Two-Year Colleges.
 NOTE 11p.
 EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.83 HC-\$1.67 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS *Advisory Committees; *Citizen Participation; Community Colleges; *Junior Colleges; Laymen; National Surveys; Participant Characteristics; School Community Relationship

ABSTRACT

In order to determine the degree to which two-year colleges utilize Lay Advisory Committees (LACs), a questionnaire was sent to 1,200 two-year colleges nationwide. Of the 695 institutions responding, 82% were public. While 93% of the respondents had worked with LACs in the past, only 91% were presently working with them; yet, 75% were in the process of establishing new committees. Only three percent indicated that they did not plan to establish new committees in the future. LACs were utilized most often in relation to community service programs and skill certification programs; they were utilized least often in relation to board of trustee policy. The most important attribute looked for in the selection of LAC members was familiarity with the subject matter and with the concerns of the particular committee. Over 80% of the respondents agreed that the powers and duties of LAC members should be fully described and delineated. Other data reported indicate the methods for selecting LAC members, the kinds of interest groups represented on LACs, and the functions of LACs. The survey instrument is appended. (DC)

 * Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
 * materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
 * to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
 * reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
 * of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
 * via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
 * responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
 * supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

The Utilization of Lay Advisory Committees
in Two-Year Colleges

Since ancient times citizen participation in the educational process of democratic nations has been encouraged. The strength of American education has been active citizen involvement on the local level and encompasses all areas, including higher education, and two-year colleges in particular. This community involvement is to assure and maintain a direct channel of communications between the general public and the institution. It serves to make colleges more aware of rapidly changing educational needs of industry, business, and government, and to respond with appropriate educational programs. A Lay Advisory Committee (LAC) can convey new community developments quickly to a board of trustees and to college administrators. This direct line of communication will facilitate a more expeditious and effective way of decision making in education.

A nationwide assumption is that one of the reasons for the tremendous growth in the enrollment at two-year colleges has been the responsiveness of these institutions to community needs. Some two-year colleges have indeed made use of LACs to serve as channels of communication between the colleges and the communities. These committees were generally established to identify educational needs and to bring community opinion and planning to the attention of the administrators and faculty concerned. We have assumed that LACs are usually composed of civic minded individuals possessing specialized experience and knowledge, who are active and well known in community affairs. A survey was conducted to determine the utilization of LACs. The findings of this survey may be helpful in an objective assessment of the responsiveness of two-year colleges to their communities.

A questionnaire was mailed to those 1200 two-year colleges listed in the 1974 Community and Junior College Directory, published by the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges. Statistics in this report are based on a sample of 695 (N=695). This number represents only those replies returned to Educational Testing Service on or before the requested date. Returns that have arrived since then are not included in the sample but bring the number of returns close to 800.

Twenty-five percent of this sample represent midwestern states, by far the largest geographic subgroup among those responding. Only five percent contributing to the study originated in the central states, adjacent to the midwest region. After analysis of data and of comments, it was found that several midwestern states mandate the establishment of LACs in two-year institutions; a logical explanation for their firm establishment and effectiveness; 82 percent responding were public institutions, with enrollments under 5,000 in 39 percent within the sample group. Judging from comments made by respondents to the questionnaire the nationwide tendency is in favor of the establishment and effective maintenance of LACs, with state and local encouragement and/or mandate.

Varying degrees of success with such committees are reflected in answers to the questions posed. While 93 percent of the institutions have worked with LACs in the past, only 91 percent are utilizing them at present, yet 75 percent are in the process of establishing new committees. Only three percent indicated that they do not plan to utilize LACs in the future. The trend of planned utilization of LACs may be reflective of their institutional effectiveness, or may be due to other variables not investigated in this study. Over 80 percent of the respondents agreed that the powers and duties of such committees should be fully described and delineated and should be explained to members prior to their appointment. Of particular importance is the

statement that LACs do not have decision making powers, but are merely advisory in nature. Ninety-two percent consider LACs as a positive tool in the decision making process of administration and faculty. While there was considerable agreement that LACs are an excellent vehicle for public relations, respondents also were in accord that this was not the primary function of such committees.

There was a strong expression of a real need for direct committee input. This need was shown in all areas of curriculum and of college management. It was least expressed in the operational sphere of boards of trustees, and most in curriculum development with emphasis on vocational skills, as well as community service programs. In these two areas institutions indicated fullest utilization of such committees, greatest impact, and a definite affect on curricular offerings. The majority of committees are established on a permanent basis with names of members listed in some type of publication. This ranges from duplicated, in-house brochures, to elaborate, printed pamphlets.

Forty-five percent indicated that the selection process of committee membership represented a combined effort of presidents, deans, department chairpersons and the board of trustees. There was a strong indication that sufficient publicity was given on a local level to the function, membership and establishment of such groups. The most important factor in committee member selection, 91 percent, was the persons familiarity with the subject matter and concerns of the particular committee to be established. Least important was the potential member's political activity within the local municipality. Forty-one percent expressed that an attempt was made to have all geographic sectors of the community represented. There was little indication that importance is given to selection by sex, religion, or socio-economic grouping. Few respondents showed committee participation or membership by representatives of the student body, or the board of trustees. Over 50 percent indicated membership on all LACs by college administrators and faculty.

In choosing the three most important attributes for membership in an LAC the following results were tabulated.

1. 91% = Familiarity with subject matter and concerns of a particular committee to be established
2. 59% = Representative of a specific segment of the community
3. 55% = Well known and respected in the community
4. 50% = Adequately educated to function within the setting of the institution
5. 15% = Chosen for other reasons
6. 4% = Politically active in the local municipality

Respondents were most emphatic in their expressions concerned with decision making powers of LACs. It was pointed out, time after time in significant answers and written comments, that the primary functions of these committees are to advise an institution regarding specific programs and courses, and to lend support to program content, policies, and direction. Committee responsibilities are in the areas of referral, consultation, public relations, community support, and are limited to providing guidance and counsel. LACs do not dictate curriculum or other program policies, since these responsibilities rest with the faculty, administration, and trustees.

Functions delegated to LACs included the assessment of curricular needs in terms of the community, keeping administration and faculty informed of changes and demands in the local labor market, furnishing assistance in recruiting and placing qualified graduates in appropriate jobs; providing aid in the evaluation of instructional programs; serving as a channel of communication between college and community; lending support to college philosophy and policy; and in the case of private institutions, assist in fund raising.

Two-year institutions place a high value on the services of their LACs. They look to them for guidance in the development and continuance

of their educational programs, particularly those in the skill and vocational areas. These institutions, and the public community college in particular must be related to the social forces at work in their own communities. Indeed, the college not closely identified with the community it serves, is not fulfilling its function. The real task of such institutions is the development of trained, educated persons to meet the needs of the community. Judging from the replies to this survey this can best be accomplished with the help of LACs.

Highlights

- Motivated by state and local encouragement and/or mandate, a nationwide tendency has developed to establish and to maintain LACs in two-year institutions.
- The impact of LACs has been felt MOST in curriculum development, particularly in the vocational skills area, and in community service programs.
- The impact of LACs has been felt LEAST in the operational sphere of boards of trustees.
- The most important attribute for selection and appointment to LACs has been a member's familiarity with subject matter, and with the concerns of a particular committee.
- The primary functions of LACs are to advise an institution regarding specific programs and courses, and to lend support to program content, and institutional policies.
- A strong need was expressed to have structured guidelines available, outlining establishment and maintenance procedures of LACs.

Appendix

Results of the Survey of the Utilization of Lay Advisory Committees in Two-Year Colleges

N = 695

This study was sponsored by Educational Testing Service, Princeton, New Jersey 08540

I. Respondent's View and Role Perception of Lay Advisory Committees

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>No Response</u>
A. Have you utilized Lay Advisory Committees in the past?	93%	7%	0	0
B. Are you now utilizing Lay Advisory Committees	91%	8%	0	1%
C. Do you plan to establish Lay Advisory Committees in the future?	75%	3%	4%	18%
D. Do you believe that Lay Advisory Committees should have decision making powers?	8%	83%	6%	3%
E. Do you believe that functions and powers of each Lay Advisory Committee must be fully described and delineated?	82%	13%	2%	3%
F. Do Lay Advisory Committees primarily serve a public relations function for your institution?	26%	66%	2%	6%
G. Do you consider Lay Advisory Committees as a hindrance in the decision making process of your administration and faculty?	1%	92%	3%	4%
H. Do you feel that some Lay Advisory Committee members seek appointment for other than community service reasons?	27%	54%	14%	5%

II. Selection Process of Lay Advisory Committee Membership

A. Of the following, who is primarily involved in the selection of Lay Advisory Committee membership?

21%	1. President	45%	4. Combined Effort
15%	2. Dean	2%	5. Board of Trustees
15%	3. Department Chairperson	2%	6. Other

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Do Not Know</u>	<u>No Response</u>
B. Do men and women have equal representation on all Lay Advisory Committees?	26%	55%	12%	7%
C. Are all major religions represented on all Lay Advisory Committees?	13%	30%	50%	7%
D. Are Board of Trustee members represented on all Lay Advisory Committees?	8%	82%	2%	8%
E. Are all geographic sectors of the community represented on all Lay Advisory Committees?	41%	38%	15%	6%
F. Are all socio-economic groups represented on all Lay Advisory Committees?	23%	50%	21%	6%
G. Are student members included in all Lay Advisory Committees?	20%	72%	2%	6%
H. Are faculty members included in all Lay Advisory Committees?	53%	40%	0	7%
I. Are college administrators included in the membership of all Lay Advisory Committees?	51%	42%	0	7%
J. Has a Lay Advisory Committee function been developed and is this explained in writing to members prior to their appointment?	70%	20%	3%	7%
K. Is publicity given in local newspapers as to the establishment, function, and membership of Lay Advisory Committees?	57%	33%	3%	7%
L. Which of the following do you consider the three most important attributes in the selection of Lay Advisory Committee membership? (Check only three):				

The person to be considered for membership is:

- 55% 1. Well known and respected in the community
- 4% 2. Politically active in the local municipality
- 91% 3. Familiar with the subject matter and concerns of the particular committee to be established
- 59% 4. Representative of a specific segment of the community
- 50% 5. Adequately educated to function within the setting of the institution
- 15% 6. Chosen for other reasons

III Direct Input of Lay Advisory Committee

	<u>Bd. of Trustee Policy</u>	<u>College Philos- ophy</u>	<u>Acad. Transfer Programs</u>	<u>Skill Cert. Programs</u>	<u>Community Service Programs</u>	<u>Other</u>
A. How are Lay Advisory Committees utilized in your college?	15%	29%	31%	81%	70%	22%
B. While Lay Advisory Committees have not been utilized by this institution in all or any of the areas mentioned, they would be most useful and needed in which of the following?	7%	17%	15%	30%	32%	8%
C. Lay Advisory Committees are established by this institution on a permanent basis in which of the following areas?	8%	12%	21%	70%	47%	16%
D. Lay Advisory Committees are established by this institution on an ad hoc basis in which of the following areas?	8%	14%	11%	21%	30%	15%
E. Lay Advisory Committees have brought about addition or deletion of college programs in which of the following areas?	2%	5%	17%	67%	48%	9%
F. Lay Advisory Committees have brought about changes in course content in which of the following areas?	1%	3%	24%	75%	44%	9%

IV. Degree of Decision Making Powers of Lay Advisory Committees

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No Response</u>
A. Are Lay Advisory Committees involved in an assessment study of your community's educational needs?	80%	13%	7%
B. Are Lay Advisory Committee members involved in faculty recruitment?	33%	60%	7%
C. Is the primary function of your Lay Advisory Committees to consult with faculty and administration in regard to a specific program or course?	72%	19%	9%
D. Must any action taken based on Lay Advisory Board recommendation be approved by the president?	65%	26%	9%
E. Must any action taken based on Lay Advisory Board recommendation be approved by the Board of Trustees?	42%	44%	14%

Bibliography

- Barber, Daniel Maxfield, "Effective Citizen Participation Strategies for Educational Leaders," Dissertation Abstracts #74-24,220
- Blair, Richard Scott, "An Analysis of the Functional Relationship Between the Administrative Staff of A Public Community College and Its Vocational-Technical Lay Advisory Committees," Dissertation Abstracts, #74-24,043
- Brick, Michael, Forum and Focus for the Junior College Movement, Teachers College, New York, New York, 1964.
- Cohen, Arthur M., Dateline '79: Heretical Concepts for the Community College, Glencoe Press, Beverly Hills, California, 1969.
- Fields, Ralph R., The Community College Movement, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., Princeton, New Jersey, 1962.
- Harlacher, Ervin L., The Community Dimension of the Community College, Prentice Hall, Inc. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1969.
- Mahon, John Joseph, "Trustee Involvement in Curricular Changes," Dissertation Abstracts #73-25,163
- Monroe, Charles R., Profile of the Community College, Jossey-Bass, Inc., San Francisco, California, 1972.
- Reynolds, James W., The Comprehensive Junior College Curriculum, McCutchan Publishing Corporation, Berkeley, California, 1969.
- Taylor, Harold, How to Change Colleges: Notes on Radical Reform, Holt Rinehart and Winston, New York, New York, 1971.
- Thornton, James W., Jr., The Community Junior College, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, New York, 2nd ed., 1966.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

AUG 27 1976

CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGES